Bangladesh's opposition to linking of rivers

4103. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bangladesh has opposed the Central Government's proposal to link the rivers;

(b) whether they contend that the linking of rivers may lead to the complete flow of water to India only; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken by Government to resolve the issue with Bangladesh?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) Bangladesh has raised objection to the Himalayan component of inter-linking of river projects at several forum.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise as the interlinking of Himalayan rivers are still at a conceptual stage.

Completion of irrigation projects in Rajasthan

4104. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of irrigation projects are running behind their original schedule as on date;

(b) if so, whether the Government are considering to invite participation to complete such irrigation projects in the States particularly in Rajasthan;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the remedial steps proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Irrigation is a State subject and the planning, execution, funding, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments based on their priorities. There is no proposal under consideration of Ministry of Water Resources to invite private participation to complete irrigation projects in the States.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Central Government launched the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) in 1996-97 to provide Central Loan Assistance for such approved irrigation projects which are in an advanced stage of construction and beyond the resources capability of the States that can be completed in the next four financial years. An amount of Rs. 19,438 crore has been released under AIBP as Central Loan Assistance/grant upto March 2006 in respect of 200 major/medium irrigation projects and 5519 Surface Water Minor Irrigation Schemes. With the assistance provided under AIBP, 50 major/medium irrigation projects/project components and 3480 Surface Water Minor Irrigation Schemes have so far been reported as completed. The Central Water Commission is monitoring all the major/medium irrigation projects under AIBP and other selected major/medium irrigation projects under AIBP and other selected major/medium irrigation projects on a regular basis.

Flood problem in Assam

4105. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the status and achievements as on date of the Special Task Force that was constituted by the Prime Minister to tackle the flood problem of Assam;

(b) whether any policy has been concretised so far and any time-bound projects have been initiated for permanent solution of the problem; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ): (a) to (c) A Task Force on Flood Management/Erosion Control was set up under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Central Water Commission to look into the problem of floods in Assam and neighbouring States, West Bengal, Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Task Force recommended flood management measures under Immediate, Short Term-I and Short Term-II Categories. A revised scheme for "critical flood control and anti erosion schemes in Brahmaputra and Barak Valley" under the State Sector incorporating the projects recommended by Task Force under immediate and Short Term-I categories has been prepared. The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) has recommended the revised scheme for an amount of Rs. 225 crore for 10th plan for approval of CCEA.